



## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

### News Release

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GOVERNOR

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### **DHS STEPPING UP EFFORTS WITH COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED GROUPS TO RECRUIT MORE FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS**

HONOLULU – The Department of Human Services (DHS), together with Lt. Governor James. R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr., held an all-day information conference at the State Capitol Auditorium today to help boost recruitment of foster and adoptive parents in Hawaii.

The Community and Faith-Based Recruitment Conference, in collaboration with AdoptUsKids, focuses on utilizing community resources and partnerships to find safe and permanent homes for Hawaii’s foster children. Among the speakers was a representative from the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Adoption (NCWRCA), who emphasized the importance of community and faith-based models for recruiting and supporting resource families.

“We desperately need more foster and adoptive parents in Hawaii, especially those in the Native Hawaiian community because most of our foster children are Native Hawaiian,” said DHS Director Lillian Koller. “This is a need that cannot be met without the help of the community and faith-based groups.”

DHS officials estimate that more than 50 percent of the children in DHS foster care are of Native Hawaiian descent.

Conference attendees participated in focus groups to assist DHS in developing a plan to strengthen and enhance recruitment and retention of Native Hawaiian and other culturally diverse foster and adoptive parents. In the focus groups, foster and adoptive parents also shared their experiences and encouraged community members to consider becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Lt. Governor Aiona, a former Family Court Judge, opened the conference, calling for the community to “step up to the plate, and help Hawaii’s most vulnerable keiki.”

“This community effort is critical to perpetuating the Native Hawaiian culture,” Lt. Governor Aiona said. “Our goal is to preserve family ties, cultural connections and ensure that our children remain as close to home as possible.”

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